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ABSTRACT

The guide, designed for regular classroom teachers, outlines principles and strategies for teaching limited-English-proficient children. The first chapter addresses the task of building a trusting relationship with students and establishing a comfortable learning environment. Topics include sensitivity to cultural and linguistic differences, fostering classroom involvement, and meeting parents. The second chapter reviews principles of second-language development, with special attention given to setting reasonable expectations. Chapter 3 presents a number of practical teaching strategies, both techniques borrowed from language teaching and innovative ideas. These include using language effectively, using multisensory activities to engage students, building literacy skills, creating a learning community, and using technology. The final chapter encourages teachers to network with other professionals in the school and community, through student peer partners, team teaching, special school personnel services, cross-age tutoring, and other community resources. In each chapter, suggested activities and suggested readings are offered. (MSE)

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Children With Limited English

Teaching Strategies for the Regular Classroom

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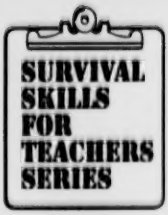

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Children with Limited English
Teaching Strategies for the Regular Classroom
Ellen Kottler

Children With Limited English

Teaching Strategies for the Regular Classroom

Ellen Kottler

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Preface

One of the greatest challenges in education today is attempting to reach an increasingly diverse student population consisting of children who come from varied cultures and who speak hundreds of different languages. Many of these children, whether recent immigrants or inhabitants of homes in which only native languages are spoken, struggle tremendously with the burdens of not only keeping up with their schoolwork and establishing a social network but also doing so with limited or nonexistent English speaking skills.

When such a child is first presented in the classroom doorway, many questions come to the teacher's mind: How can I possibly help this student when we don't even speak the same language? How will the other children react to having this child in their midst? How can I meet this child's special needs? What can I do to make the adjustment easiest for all of us?

This ever more frequent situation presents challenges, but there are a number of options available to the regular classroom teacher who is looking for some "survival skills," ideas, and resources to better serve students acquiring English. The purpose of this book is to help teachers function more effectively with this student population and do so in such a way as to enhance rather than complicate their classroom environment.

Who Can Use This Book

This book is directed first to the population of beginning teachers who are being initiated into the realities of teaching as a career. It is overwhelming enough to think about managing a relatively homogeneous group of kids without contemplating the added complexities of working with a class in which the children don't all speak the same language! Useful strategies with limited-language students will thus augment a new teacher's repertoire. Indeed, some school districts organize support groups for new teachers in which they can talk about the issues and situations that confront them, such as working with limited-English students in the regular classroom. The survival skills presented here will serve as a handy reference for new teachers facing an increasingly diverse school population.

Next, students in teacher education courses will find this a good primary or supplementary text. As future teachers and student teachers prepare to meet the needs of diverse public school populations, this book addresses the concerns and fears of those who have not had the training or opportunity to work with students who are learning English as a second language.

Finally, veteran teachers who are experiencing professional transitions in their work, who may have logged years of experience in the classroom but who have had few opportunities to work with students new to the English language, will also find many of the concepts and methods described in this book quite useful.

Content and Process

The progression of chapters follows a pattern that resembles quite closely what practicing teachers actually do when they face the challenge of helping non-English-speaking children. Chapter 1 addresses the crucial task of developing a relationship with students in such a way as to build trust and establish a comfortable environment. Chapter 2 reviews principles related to second-language development, with attention to setting reasonable expectations in the classroom. Chapter 3 presents a number of practical

teaching strategies. Many of these include borrowed techniques from foreign language methodology as well as technological innovations. Finally, chapter 4 encourages expanding the classroom by networking with other professionals in the school and in the community as a way to involve others in the learning process.

It is quite clear that the future of our educational system in this country will be determined largely by our willingness and ability to help an increasingly diverse population of children who want their chance to reach their dreams.

I would like to acknowledge the support and assistance of President Gracia Alkema, reviewer Judy Stobbe, copy editor David Dexter, and the entire production staff of Corwin Press.

This book is dedicated to Jeffrey A. Kottler.

ELLEN KOTTLER

About the Author

Ellen Kottler received her BA degree from the University of Michigan and her MA degree from Eastern Michigan University and is working toward her Ed.D. degree at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has been a teacher for over 20 years in public and private schools, alternative schools, adult education programs, and universities. She has worked in inner-city schools, as well as in suburban and rural settings, and holds teaching endorsements in psychology, history, social studies, Spanish, and teaching English as a second language.

She is the co-author of *Teacher as Counselor* (1993), also published by Corwin Press.

Getting to Know the Student

Michel is a new arrival in your classroom; he has been with you for the past 2 weeks. While the other children are working on an assignment, you notice that he is intensely occupied looking around the room. Wanting to offer him all the encouragement you can, you approach his desk and ask if he needs any help. At first he looks at you with a blank stare, hesitates a moment longer, and then shakes his head. His eyes move back to the page on his desk in front of him. As soon as you turn your back, his eyes resume their travels around the room.

You sit at your desk, bewildered yourself: Did he understand what you asked him? Does he have any idea what is going on with the assignment? How are you supposed to help him when you can't even communicate in such a way that he will respond? Does he have some learning disabilities or perhaps some deficit in his social skills? You notice he has yet to interact with the other children. How are you supposed to make any of these determinations when you are not even aware of the extent of his English communication and comprehension?

Sensitivity to Cultural and Linguistic Differences

The United States Census Bureau has reported that 32 million people, or one American in seven, speak a language other than English at home. This trend can be traced to a number of patterns—shifting populations throughout North America; increased immigration, especially from Latin America and Southeast Asia; and rising birthrates of non-English-proficient (NEP) or limited-English-proficient (LEP) populations.

Some of your students will be members of minority groups who are multilingual in languages other than English; others will have minimal language proficiency that impairs their ability to be academically or socially successful. Whatever the case, teachers in regular classrooms are facing increased numbers of students with limited English-speaking ability.

As you watch Michel from your desk, you reflect on some of your impressions so far. You have noticed he smiles when he enters the room. He seems shy and rarely speaks, but you believe that is to be expected, given the new situation he finds himself in. You note he follows the other children in carrying out routines, yet his schoolwork has been minimal. You realize that you actually know very little about him. How did he end up where he is? What is important to him? What does he think about when he is daydreaming? How does he feel inside? You resolve to find some way to get to know him better.

In order to carry out an effective plan for any of your students, you will need to assess the skills, abilities, and interests they bring to the classroom, with special attention to their cultural background and language proficiency. In the collection of diverse peoples who make up North America, it has become more and more important to be sensitive to individual learning styles, communication patterns, and interaction styles that are reflective of various minority cultures. Thus the approach you might take with a Mexican American student would be quite different from one you would choose with a Moapa Paiute Indian, a Maori child from the Cook Islands, or a new arrival from Korea. Before you can ever expect to reach any of the limited-English-speaking children in your class, you must first become a functional expert in their backgrounds. Such a system-

atic interest will become a foundation from which to structure your teaching efforts.

For each of the specific practical suggestions for working with children of limited English presented here and throughout the book, it is assumed that you will wish to make a number of adaptations to your particular teaching situation, student needs, and individual preferences. In order for any techniques to become part of you as a person, and as a professional, it will be necessary for you to integrate what is offered in such a way that it fits with the way that you like to work and relate to others.

Getting to Know the Student

The first phase in any helping effort involves learning about the person you are intending to reach. All communication is based on a sensitivity to a person's needs. Before you can ever hope to connect with and influence a child, you will first have to know about what it is he or she considers most important. This background information involves not only assessing academic skills in verbal or quantitative areas but also learning about family, cultural, and social customs that are an integral part of the child's life.

Here are a number of suggestions for getting to know your students. What makes many of these strategies so helpful is that they do not require a high level of language proficiency to get started.

Take a Picture!

Photographs are a universal language that everyone speaks. Taken periodically throughout the school year, pictures capture moments in time. They can be easily displayed. They serve as a reminder to the student as to how he or she felt at the beginning of school and how initial impressions and feelings have changed. You can take pictures of the student to record participation in different activities—playing a part in a skit, painting a wall mural, solving a math problem on the board, working on a cooperative learning task, interacting with other children in the lunchroom. Pictures can be taken of projects that are too big to keep on a permanent basis in the classroom.

Pictures are also an excellent way for communicating to parents what happens during the school day. Giving a child a picture of the students and teachers in the classroom will provide him or her with a way to take the events of the school day home to share with parents, other brothers and sisters, extended family, and friends.

Students can also be invited to bring in pictures of themselves and their family to share with the class. These can be used for get-acquainted activities, to stimulate speech or writing assignments, as well as to build self-esteem. Most of all, they allow children to help educate others about the unique circumstances in which they live. Among Maori children, for example, their individual names are relatively less important to their families than the mountain and river near where they are from. Each child has an individual story to tell. With photographs as aids, the description of the background from which the family originates can be rich.

Although videotaping has some special advantages over still photographs, it presents a few additional problems. Students with limited language proficiency may find it difficult to speak under such "performance" conditions. Until the student is comfortable with the taping process, time in front of the camera should be limited.

Develop a Portfolio

Developing a record of the child's progress in school is the first step toward getting to know the student. Make a list of everything the child can do without using language—build, sort, match, categorize, sequence, copy, draw, listen to music, look at pictures, mimic, make faces, pantomime. Then, look for examples of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. With respect to English, notice and categorize mistakes. Are there pronunciation errors, grammatical or syntactic errors, or comprehension or semantic errors? Include notes from your observations of interactions with other people, samples of student work, descriptions of projects, pictures, as well as grades and outside test results you receive.

Determine which instructional activities the student enjoys most. Which activities does the student try to avoid? Could these preferences be a reflection of cultural values? For example, does the student prefer cooperative learning exercises rather than those

that require competition? Analyze the homework. Does the student seem to be able to successfully complete what has been assigned?

Take your examination one step further and find out what activities the child pursues after school. Is the student a member of a scouting organization, a church group, or an athletic team? Does the student have a pet? Does the student belong to a choir or band or other school club? What does the child do when he or she is alone? By identifying the child's interests, you can later relate lessons to topics the child will be able to identify with and build on the knowledge base already established.

Not only will a portfolio give you a well-rounded picture of the student, it will also help you monitor the student's progress and give you a wide variety of material to present at parent conferences. You will also be able to provide the student with a visual record of his or her progress.

Explore the Student's Family Background

To learn about the student's family background, plan information-seeking activities. For example, through geography lessons you can discover where students came from, whether it was a rural or urban setting, the reasons for moving, and the length of time in this country. Through the use of pictures you can find out how many brothers and sisters are in the family, their ages, sexes, whether they attend school or not, and whether extended family members live in the household. Through conversation you can learn the lines of authority in the family and the patterns of socialization.

On the elementary school level, this information can be elicited through discussion of the family, counting and sorting activities, or responses to children's literature. On the secondary level, the information can be collected through discussion of immigration in a social studies class, the family in a home economics class, genetics in a science class, the concept of role in a sociology class, or reaction to a reading in an English class. Lessons on multicultural topics such as relationships, legends, and customs can be incorporated into the curriculum.

Once students develop some degree of rudimentary writing skills, they can express their ideas through writing assignments, such as journals, autobiographies, or structured work sheets. Those who are not yet proficient in their writing can instead draw pictures to respond to questions or express themselves. One of the best assignments for any age group, also favored by counselors and therapists who are attempting to learn about children's experiences, is to ask them to draw a picture of themselves with their family. Through words, gestures, dramatic enactments, or further drawings, they can then be encouraged to talk about their family.

Learning about the student's position in the family and assigned household responsibilities will give you insight into behavior at school and after school. Does the child care for younger brothers and sisters or elderly grandparents? Does the child cook and clean for the family? Does the child work to support the family? These responsibilities will limit the student's involvement in school as well as in community activities. For example, the student may not have time or money to come to a spaghetti dinner, talent show, or extracurricular activities. However, you will become aware of the students who are capable of fulfilling leadership roles, those who are nurturing, and those who are capable of taking on tasks requiring responsibility in the classroom.

Michel disclosed, through gestures and halting English, that he was left alone much of the time. His parents both worked long hours, leaving him to take care of the house. He was able to communicate that he did understand much of what was said to him. He had been watching a lot of television, especially music videos, and he found that by memorizing the words to the songs, his ear was becoming more accustomed to English. He very much wanted to do his homework, but he was just too busy with things that he had to do around the house. In his spare time, what little he could find, he had started playing around with a harmonica. Music seemed to be an important part of his life.

Exploring the area of home responsibilities will also give you an arena in which to converse with the child, to give him or her an opportunity to practice speaking English in a private setting with you. Furthermore, the child has the opportunity to show off that

which he or she is most proud of—baby sister, new puppy, knowledge of his or her native history, cooking skills, or harmonica playing. This can later be shared with the class in small groups or even in the whole community as confidence grows.

Determine the Home Attitude Toward Learning English

Finding out how many people at home speak English will give you an idea of the support and practice, if any, the child receives at home. Help with school homework may simply not be available from the child's family. Support for your efforts may be nonexistent.

It is extremely important to find out what the attitude is among family members for learning English. In two different Arab American families, for example, quite different messages were given at home. In one case, the child's entire family was attempting to learn English together. They watched situation comedies on television at night and tried to talk about what happened in English. This child received a strong message from his parents: If you want to succeed in this country you must speak English perfectly.

In another case, the family atmosphere emphasized much more the importance of maintaining their cultural roots. Arabic was the only language permitted at home. Because the parents both lived and worked in an exclusively Arab community, English remained a "foreign" language. The message this child received from his family was quite different from the other situation: Speak English only if you must, but Arabic is your real tongue.

It is not uncommon that first-generation immigrants may feel that learning English is not important and resent the new language and customs of the United States. They have left behind all that is familiar; all they have remaining is their own language. As in the case of the first example, others may see speaking English as a vital survival skill and refuse to speak native languages in the home. This, of course, presents its own problems, because then the children may lose much of their ethnic heritage. There are certain tribes of American Indians, for example, in which there is no longer anyone who speaks the native language; the children have lost the opportunity to connect with their past.

Investigate the Nature of Past School Experiences

Another factor to consider in your assessment is the type of school background the students have. Some children may have experienced an authoritarian style with an emphasis on memorization and recitation. They may be used to large group instruction with an emphasis on oral communication. They may have learned to adopt passive learning roles. The grading scales may be different than the ones used in North America. Consequently, they may experience difficulty adjusting to different expectations for behavior in school. Take care to present your procedures in such a way that the students and parents will come to understand your ways of operating.

Pay Attention to Social and Cultural Customs

It is important to become aware of individual and cultural differences and how they may contribute to potential problems in the classroom due to miscommunication. Doing an ethnographic study of your students will provide you with a wealth of information explaining their behavior and give you insight as to how best help them in the classroom. Individuals differ on the following dimensions:

- Verbal communication (pronunciation, patterns of speech, tempo of speech, stress, and pitch)
- Nonverbal communication (eye contact, meaning of gestures)
- Proxemics (spatial distance between people; for example, some people like to stand very close to one another, and backing away from them would be taken as an affront)
- Interpersonal touching (for example, whether the student prefers a light or firm pat on the back)
- Attention span (ability and motivation to sustain interest)
- Orientation toward learning (for example, preference for a quiet or noisy background)
- Social values (peer group influences)
- Intellectual orientation (for example, is frequent questioning valued or discouraged?)

In considering the social and cultural background of your students, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Has the student been socialized to be an active participant or a passive recipient of information in the classroom?
2. How is the concept of time viewed? Is punctuality a virtue or is time considered to be flexible?
3. Are students expected to make eye contact with their teachers or look down out of respect?
4. Do students nod their heads to be polite or to show they understand?
5. Is the head considered sacred and therefore not to be touched?
6. Do parents regard teachers as experts and refrain from expressing differences of opinion?
7. Is cooperation or competition encouraged?
8. Is the family patriarchal, restricting educational aspirations for female children?
9. Is education or work valued more in the family?
10. Do students expect specific directions for carrying out tasks and therefore have difficulty choosing their own learning activities?
11. Do students not ask questions because they have been taught not to bother adults?
12. Is the student expected to tell the teacher what the teacher wants to hear (for example, that an assignment was completed when it hasn't even been started)?
13. Are expressions of emotions and feelings emphasized or hidden?
14. Are speaking or listening modes of communication preferred?
15. Do students exhibit low self-esteem and self-defeating behaviors because they feel they cannot succeed as a result of socioeconomic marginality and discrimination?

Students will learn certain behaviors are appropriate for school and others are expected at home. Often students will develop two codes of conduct. One story in particular makes this point clear. A young boy was being disciplined by his mother. She had been very unhappy with something that he did. After she finished scolding him, he looked at her and said, "Am I supposed to look at you (as

teachers at school request) or look away from you (as a sign of respect)? I can't remember."

Teachers must realize, too, that students will respond in very different ways to the pull between their two cultures. Some are eager and proud to adopt the new ways. Others are resentful and resistant.

You will find it valuable to learn about the cultural characteristics particular to your students. In some ways, this is the best part of our job—that we have the opportunity to learn not only from books but from the fascinating people we work with. Teachers must be aware of cultural differences in order to create a supportive environment. Facial expressions and gestures can be widely interpreted—even a smile can have different interpretations, from loving to cynical.

Just as you do not wish to misinterpret what your students' behavior means, neither do you want them to misread your gestures and actions. Discussing communication patterns with all your students will help everyone develop a sensitivity to differences.

Establishing a Comfortable Environment

To progress further with Michel, you might ask yourself these questions: What can I do to help Michel feel more comfortable in the classroom? How can I structure the learning environment to facilitate his development of English as well as his mastery of the material in my curriculum? Just as important, how can I help him to like being at school, at least during the time that he is with me?

Welcome

Encourage a new student to come into the classroom with gentle but not overbearing enthusiasm. It cannot be overemphasized how important it is to learn to pronounce the student's name correctly. One student reports what a tremendous difference such an effort made to him: "My name, Efraim, is difficult for many Anglos to get right. I don't make a big deal about it one way or another, but when I first came to this country, my teacher made me say my name over and over until she could say it perfectly. She used to kid me that

this was going to be her final examination and that I had her permission to correct her if she ever made a mistake. I can't tell you how much I appreciated that effort on her part. I really trusted her."

It also helps if you can learn a few phrases in the student's native language, so that you can greet him or her each day with a special welcome: *Ka hue?* ("What's happening?" in Fijian); *Apa khabar?* ("How are you?" in Malaysian); "¿Qué tal?" ("How goes it?" in Spanish). Look for clues in the student's behavior as to what will make him or her feel comfortable. Does the student cling to your side or stand independently away? Does the student speak freely or just give a nod of the head? Do you need to assign a partner to stay with the child for a few days? Picture yourself in the child's position—what would help you to feel more at ease in the school?

Provide the student with a comfortable space to sit and work and the supplies necessary to complete his or her assignments. Make sure the child is sitting in a place with as few distractions as possible. Introduce the child to a few of the other students at a time. Help him or her learn to pronounce the names of other classmates. Be sure to continue eye contact and gestures of reassurance throughout the day.

Label

To help students develop their English skills, label items in your room with name cards. Create safety signs using pictures. Label supply closets with pictures and names of objects. Have dictionaries readily available and use them often yourself to model for the children. Make time for the new student to teach classmates about the names of things in his or her own language.

Use Multicultural Materials in the Classroom

Hang up posters reflecting the diversity of people and customs in our society. Communicate to others by the way you design your space that differences are valued. For example, display different alphabets used around the world. Pictures of people's faces from around the world can also be represented. Feature the accomplishments of people of different backgrounds. Play different kinds of music. Select posters that reflect different styles of art from around

the world. Bring speakers to the classroom to talk about their cultures so that students will become familiar with a variety of customs—not only clothing and food but also mannerisms and values. Read stories from different cultures. Identify concepts around which to plan a multicultural curriculum for the classroom so that students will be able to view the world around them from diverse ethnic perspectives.

Connect With Native Language Speakers

Find out if there are other children who speak the same language, if not in the classroom then somewhere in the school. These children can explain procedures and answer questions. They can offer emotional support by identifying with the experiences of the new student. Furthermore, they can serve as role models. Contact bilingual adults to work with you and the student. Contact the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in your area to come and welcome the new student and provide an orientation to your school.

Set Routines

Establish routines throughout the day and review them with the class. With older students, make out a schedule for them to follow. Be conscious of your terminology. Use the same wording from day to day. Rather than say "It's time for gym" one day and "It's time for PE" the next, choose one term and stick with it. Indicate with gestures the directions in which to move. Demonstrate with objects. Write important words on the board or display them on an overhead projector. Ask other students to model responses for your limited-English-speaking students.

Fostering Classroom Involvement

In addition to strategies designed to build relationships with students, and to help them develop rudimentary English skills, much can also be initiated within the classroom to make assimilation easier.

Assign a Buddy

Assign students to be a "buddy." One classmate can be responsible for helping with schoolwork. Another can be responsible for guiding the student to lunch. A third can be responsible for identifying the correct bus for the ride home after school. These initial contacts often lead to friendships in which the child must learn to speak better English in order to communicate.

In particular, a study partner will be useful in showing the student what materials to use, demonstrating procedures, and re-explaining information in "student" language. The partner can read to the child and work with the student orally until literacy skills develop. The partner will model social customs appropriate to the classroom. In return, the partner has the opportunity to develop responsibility and leadership skills. In fact, in the optimal classroom environment, children compete for the privilege of guiding the newcomer.

Small Groups

As the comfort level rises, the nature of the student's participation in the classroom can change to that of cooperative groups. The small group setting may actually be more consistent with the child's cultural background than the whole class setting. Small groups will give the student exposure to additional peers, provide for hearing different points of view (as well as accents), and enable him or her to contribute to a project. The student will have the opportunity to try out new language skills with peers as an audience before facing the teacher.

In one school, a teacher adapted some of the activities from "adventure-based" counseling interventions in which limited-English-speaking students were mixed with other children and then given group assignments that were essentially nonverbal—cooperating in such a way as to get everyone through an obstacle course, taking turns catching one another during "trust falls," and group "juggling" in which the children worked to get as many balls into play as possible.

Whole Group

Following individual conversations with you and practice with groups of students, the limited-English child should be ready to speak in front of the entire class. Nevertheless, careful thought must be given as to the type of response you will ask for, depending on the language proficiency of the child. A nod of the head, indicating "Yes" or "No," may be the only response the child is capable of. Later, a child may be deliberately prepared to answer one particular question at a future time: "OK, Michel, tomorrow during math I am going to ask for a volunteer to tell us what is most similar between two different sets of numbers. Now, what are you going to say?"

Learning English as a second language takes a long time. Students will be able to understand long before they are able to speak. There may be a silent period in which the student learns by listening but is not ready to speak. Language acquisition will be more effective if what the student hears is comprehensible. The learning will be facilitated by your conscious incorporation of strategies such as use of gestures, visual aids, regalia, and repetition. In response, the student can demonstrate comprehension by using gestures or pointing to pictures. You can also ask students to "act out" a response to a question.

Structured Responses

For many children, speaking in front of a group of people, especially one including an adult in an authority position, can be a terrifying experience. Carefully wording questions to call for a "Yes" or "No" response, or providing a choice of words for the student to choose from, will make it easy for a student just beginning to learn English. Later, open-ended questions can generate more extensive answers. As mentioned previously, students can practice with a partner or in a small group before giving a response in front of the entire class.

Meeting the Parents

There will be several occasions for meeting with parents of your students—open house at school, parent conferences, and other school events such as field days, recitals, and award ceremonies. If you know that the parents do not speak English, arrange for an interpreter to be present, such as another family member.

Opening Lines of Communication

To prepare for the school encounters, you can send explanatory letters home provided they are in the parents' native language and the parents can read. A telephone call from someone who speaks the native language will also acquaint the parents with the customs of the school.

Some parents will not be able to come to school if there are younger children in the home. You will have to inform them if baby-sitting is available or if they will be welcome to bring the younger children with them. Transportation may also be a problem. Arranging for rides with a neighbor or a parent volunteer would be helpful.

Be aware that to parents from some cultures, a letter or call from school can be a source of embarrassment. These parents feel it is their responsibility to teach their children how to behave. Any request from the school may be misinterpreted as a failure on their part. Such situations can be avoided if the teacher, or another parent, can explain the importance of parent-teacher communication and the school emphasis on involving parents in the educational process with regular conferences.

Conferences

Greeting the parents by name with the correct pronunciation will make a positive first impression. Collect samples of the student's work to present to the parents to show their child's progress. Pictures of the student involved in various activities will also provide

information to parents as to how the time in school is spent. You can involve the student in the conference to explain, in the language the parents best understand, the accomplishments made up to this point and goals identified for the future.

Arrange for Comfortable Seating for Conferences

Allow plenty of time. Let the parents look around the room and familiarize themselves with the setting. Inform the parents that conferences are requested on a regular basis as school policy. You might want to begin the meeting by asking the parents what questions they have. For example, the grading scales and testing measures that are used in your school may not be familiar to them. Thus reports sent home from school may be ignored or misinterpreted.

Encourage the parents to talk about their child by asking questions:

- What is the child's behavior like at home?
- What were the past educational experiences like?
- Does the child mention any problems or difficult situations?
- Is the child or any member(s) of the family experiencing any cultural conflicts?
- What are the parents' or guardians' goals for the child with respect to education?
- Are there any special needs or customs you need to take into consideration?

By developing your sensitivity to the socially appropriate customs related to interpersonal relations of the home culture, you will begin to build bridges that will further aid the work you are doing with the children. You will be able to recruit parents as partners in developing mutually agreed on goals for the students.

Teaching is about developing relationships with children, regardless of the way communication is initiated. The better you get to know the limited-English child, the more able you are to relate to him or her in language that is accessible. What greater gift can we offer children than the opportunity to improve their ability to express themselves?

Suggested Activities

1. Identify the limited-English speakers in your classroom. Develop a list of interview questions you would like to ask their parents.
2. Observe a limited-English speaker in your classroom. Note how that child interacts with others in school—students, cafeteria staff, the principal, other teachers. Use this information to plan activities that will build on the student's strengths.
3. Develop a number of activities that you could use in your classroom appropriate for (1) paired, (2) small group, and (3) whole group lessons.

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Understanding Second-Language Development

In order to use many of the methods presented in the previous and subsequent chapters, it is necessary to have some background in the nature of language acquisition. At the very least, you must have some notion about how children develop second-language abilities. In addition, you will need to have some idea about how long this process usually takes and what you can do to help facilitate development.

With students who speak limited English placed in your classroom for all or part of the day, your task becomes twofold: to teach the curriculum required by your school district and to provide language instruction in English. By becoming aware of the principles related to second-language development, you will be able to plan for the integration of content and language skills so that your students will learn to use English as they interact with each other and become involved in the academic experiences you structure for them.

Second-Language Principles

There are a number of principles that operate in the process of learning a second language. Many of these, such as the contextual nature of words—how their meaning depends on the specific situation—are a part of what teachers already understand. Yet other principles that emphasize social and cultural factors are not so readily apparent without some review of the underlying concepts.

Language Learning and Language Acquisition

There is a difference, as Krashen and Terrell (1982) have pointed out, between learning a language and acquiring one. The latter occurs informally as children subconsciously develop language skills by listening to others and becoming aware of language in their environment. This "inside-out" process takes place as students participate in their environment.

However, language learning occurs in formal settings, such as when adults consciously develop language skills by attending school, listening to tapes, and/or hiring private tutors. This "outside-in" process takes place in structured situations and, as we well know, is considerably less inspiring as an environment for developing fluency.

Because the object of language is meaningful communication, the emphasis today on teaching English to speakers of other languages is to promote second-language development in settings in which students will acquire the target language. As such, the goal is to provide social interactions for students in which they will create meaningful communication in English as they develop academically.

As an example, you may recall situations in a foreign land in which you absolutely had to communicate in order to find a bathroom or get directions back to your hotel. Under these desperate circumstances, we are often amazed at how quickly we can acquire the necessary verbal (and nonverbal) skills to get our needs met.

The object of our educational efforts is to structure just such a situation for students in which they acquire English as a means for survival, or in a way that is useful, rather than as another in a series of homework assignments.

Appropriate Level of Communication

In order to foster development of English, you as the teacher must provide communication that can be understood. This should include words that students already understand plus new vocabulary that they will be able to figure out from the context in which it is presented. For example, a teacher addresses a child as follows: "Maria, I (points to self)—want—you (points to child)—to listen (points to ear)." When the teacher has evidence that Maria understands each of these words so far she continues, "Please, stand up (gestures with hands and then demonstrates)." Consequently, the teacher must pay attention to (1) delivery—for example, making sure to pronounce words clearly and using real objects and gestures, (2) content—making sure material is appropriate and familiar, and (3) environment—creating a comfortable atmosphere in which students have positive experiences that are relatively free of anxiety.

Systems of Language

When a person is learning English, he or she is learning not only the sounds of the language (phonology), how words are built (morphology), the meanings of the sounds (semantics), and the rules that govern the structure of the language (syntax) but also the particular situations in which these words would be used. The person also needs to know the social context—when and how to use it. Distinguishing when to use formal and informal expressions is as important as knowing grammatical rules and vocabulary words. One would not use the expression "Waz (what's) up?" in addressing a priest or rabbi; however, it would be appropriate for saying hello to a friend passed on the city street. Students will acquire the language systems by listening to and observing other people as well as receiving explanations. It is important to care-

fully plan lessons that involve students in activities with one another so they will have opportunities to develop purposeful expressions and increase their language ability. They will realize there is a difference in how one responds depending on whether it is a formal or informal interaction. The language they use with you, the teacher, will be different from the language they use in the cafeteria or on the playground.

Language Processes

There are four areas of language proficiency. The two related to oral performance are listening and speaking, with the component parts of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. It is in these areas that students first develop mastery. There is ready stimulation and much social—not to mention survival—motivation to understand speech, to carry on a conversation, and to be able to ask questions. However, it must be noted that for most people who are learning a second language, there is a silent period that takes place. As students become accustomed to the sounds and meanings of sounds and symbols, they will be in a receptive rather than an initiating mode of behavior. They will speak little, if at all, in the beginning.

The two areas related to written performance include the ability to read and write. The corresponding component parts are spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. As no doubt you have noticed, these areas take longer to develop. Students who lack proficiency in these areas have trouble in classes that focus on reading, such as history and literature courses. Given that it may take students up to 15,000 hours of exposure to learn a language, teachers must be very patient.

Content-Based Approach

Current research in language development calls for simultaneous development, fostering a whole language experience without fragmenting the systems into discrete parts. The current school of thought is to teach English using a content-based approach; that is, through subject areas rather than a focus on grammar. This is precisely the situation faced by the regular classroom teacher. As

students are involved in meaningful learning activities that stimulate them on a cognitive level, they will develop the corresponding, necessary English-language skills. For example, as you introduce a unit on nutrition, the students will learn the terminology and expressions associated with food and health habits that contribute to daily life.

Achieving Competence

A student first develops simple conversation skills. Cummins (1988) notes that a child or adult can develop basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) in a second language in 1 to 2 years. These skills of social communication are related to the settings in which they occur (school, neighborhood, store). They are characterized as contextual in that the student gains meaning from clues in the situation—objects, pictures, and gestures and other aspects of nonverbal communication. Within 2 years, a student can participate in face-to-face conversation that is concrete and relatively cognitively undemanding.

Often when verbal fluency is developed, people assume the student can perform equally well in reading and writing tasks. Consequently, many students are released from ESL programs in schools once verbal fluency in attained. A Mexican teenager of my acquaintance moved to this country from Mexico City with his two older brothers. He attended high school for a while and then dropped out. I had been surprised by his academic difficulties, given that he was verbally expressive. When I asked him why he dropped out of school, he replied matter-of-factly that it was because he couldn't read the textbooks in English.

It takes 5 to 7 years for a student to develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which requires literacy. This proficiency is characterized by the ability to understand academic language, which is often abstract, and being able to function at an advanced cognitive level. Synthesizing information from different sources is an example of CALP.

So, don't be surprised when children placed in regular classrooms are able to converse well and get along with their fellow students but cannot master the content you present and so receive failing grades on tests. Their reading and writing skills may fall

well below the level required for success. They may also lack the cultural experiences needed to achieve immediate success in the classroom and on standardized tests. As teachers, we need to develop activities in which all students can participate and demonstrate achievement. Chapter 3 presents many ideas for your consideration.

Learning Rates

As with anything else about human behavior, there are vast individual differences in learning rates. As noted earlier, social and cultural factors play a part:

- For some children, learning English will come easily and effortlessly. It is a goal they eagerly work toward. They will have support at home from their parents.
- For others, learning English creates serious problems as they are caught between two cultures that emphasize different values. They may feel torn between the demands of home versus those at school. Their parents may feel they were successful without learning English and therefore view the time spent as unnecessary or wasteful. When students are separated from their peers, they may suffer a lowering of self-esteem.
- Many students undergo extreme socioeconomic changes when they come to North America. As people move from rural to urban areas or from middle-class to lower-class status, the families face internal adjustment even before language becomes an issue. Regardless of status, culture shock typically sets in when a person has been in the country for 5 months.
- Some form of racial and ethnic discrimination is a reality of life for many students acquiring English. Many people who are already citizens here feel that new immigrants threaten the economic and social stability of our country. The impact of prejudice and discrimination leads to low self-esteem in students. They feel less is expected of them and this is often the case. Their perceptions of themselves will affect their school performance. As teachers, we need to be sensitive to and minimize such practices.

- Age makes a difference, too. Research has substantiated a phenomenon that most people have already observed: Children of certain ages can pick up another language faster than people at other ages. In fact, some studies show that children between the ages of 8 and 12 acquire a second language faster than children between the ages of 4 and 7 and those older than 12. Thus adolescents especially may be subjected to risky situations when they are placed in the regular classroom. They are expected to do grade-level academic work and are graded accordingly when they have not achieved proficiency in English. Some are not able to bring their English proficiency up to the level needed for grade-level success.

Proficiency Levels

Language development is usually divided into several levels of increasing complexity. School districts vary in the number of levels they use to determine the proficiency of students.

1. The beginning emphasis is on oral communication, with beginning reading and writing practice and an orientation to the customs of the country. Simple oral and written responses are expected. The ability to speak English without a foreign accent also depends on the age at which the student is developing the language. Young children can learn languages without the trace of an accent. By the onset of puberty, most students lose this ability.
2. Intermediate levels add extended vocabulary and more complex grammar and focus on more complex reading and writing skills. Errors in speech decline. Speech becomes more fluent.
3. The highest levels apply language skills to increasingly abstract thought as well as to highly technical material. Students continue vocabulary and grammar development as oral and written communication skills are further strengthened.

It is entirely possible that in one class of students, you may have limited-English speakers at different levels of proficiency, each

with specific needs. Individualization of lessons is ideal but rarely practical. Chapter 3 addresses the needs of students at different levels, and chapter 4 targets resources for you to consider in working with students of different levels of proficiency.

Assessment

In order to determine the proficiency of your students, evaluation can range from informal oral interviews or quick written quizzes to a battery of formal tests on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All these methods have their limitations, so it is usually preferable to use several measures that demonstrate the student's broad range of abilities. As you are probably aware, test procedures and test items may be culturally biased against the limited-English student. Developing a portfolio as suggested in chapter 1 will provide a more thorough assessment of progress. Constant monitoring of students will make both you and them aware of progress throughout the year.

First- to Second-Language Learning

Positive Transfer

Students will not be learning English independent of their first language. Skills developed in the student's native language will transfer to English. For this reason there is strong support for bilingual education, which allows students to continue cognitive development in their first language while learning English at the same time.

Positive transfer from one's native language to English takes many forms. Students who can read in one language know the reason for reading is to acquire meaning. Students know that print is speech in written form. Limited-English-speaking students have already developed concepts in their native language and given them names. These concepts do not have to be relearned in English but only given English labels. Such students have a foundation on which to build; they will look for the rules underlying the English language. Many will have developed the appropriate spatial orientation—

reading from left to right and from top to bottom. Some will be familiar with the letters of the alphabet; others will have to be introduced to new symbols used in reading and writing. Reading comprehension skills—such as sequencing, inferring, and drawing conclusions—will transfer to English.

Cognates

There may be cognates, or words that are similar because they are derived from the same origin, that the student will be able to recognize in English. Words such as *color, radio,* and *terrible* are spelled alike in Spanish and English, although they are pronounced differently. Other words may have different spellings but will still be recognized, such as *excellent-excelente* and *dentist-dentista.* The cognates quickly widen the student's vocabulary.

One student, who had previously been quite frustrated with her progress in learning English, had a major breakthrough when she recognized the number of English words that end in *tion.* She started rattling off a list of examples she had recently heard—*station, mention, selection, function*—giggling all the while. Finally, she recognized an underlying order to this "crazy language" when she was able to associate the ending with her native *cion,* as in *mencion, seleccion,* or *funcion.*

Similarly, listening skills transfer from a first to a second language. Students will be sensitive to repetitious sounds and patterns in the language. They may need help with pronunciation and syntax, however, when they are ready to speak.

By pointing out the attributes of the student's first language that transfer to English, you can help the student feel less overwhelmed. This will also help him or her develop a positive attitude toward learning.

Negative Transfer

Students will run into situations in which previous language learning will interfere with learning English. Teachers can make students aware of such instances of negative transfer. Common mistakes in pronunciation occur when students assume a letter in

their native language makes the same sound in English. The *i* in English is pronounced as the word *eye* and not as the letter *e*, which is its sound in Spanish. Grammatical rules in the native language may not apply in English—such as the double negative. False cognates—words that appear to have similar meanings but don't—can cause students to make mistakes. *Assist* does not mean "to attend" as in Spanish but "to help." With practice, the students will avoid these mistakes. Teachers can make lists of these words that might cause confusion for students.

Errors

Mistakes are to be expected. Unless the error interferes with communication, just make a mental note. The errors will allow you to note students' progress. Try to identify the nature of the mistake. Is it due to overgeneralization of grammatical rules, or has the student forgotten vocabulary words? Don't focus on correction. Rather, rephrase and model the appropriate expression.

Code-Switching

At times, students will resort to using both their native language and English, sometimes in the same sentence. This is known as code-switching. Sometimes speakers will forget a word or will lack the necessary vocabulary. However, research shows that code-switching can be a conscious effort on the part of the speaker for expression in the most effective way (depending on the audience) rather than an inability to use either language correctly. There can be several reasons for using both languages, such as to emphasize a point or to show a personal connection.

Language development is a gradual process. By setting reasonable expectations, utilizing positive transfer when possible, and assessing development throughout the year, you will lead your students down the path to becoming proficient communicators. Guidelines for structuring your personal means of communication, implementing practical teaching strategies, and making effective presentations follow in the next chapter.

Suggested Activities

1. Tape-record the speech of a student learning English as a second language. Categorize the types of errors made and develop a lesson to address the mistakes.
2. Make a list of the native languages of your students. Chart the similarities between the first languages and English.
3. Interview students who have become proficient in English as a second language. Find out what their greatest problems were. Ask them for teaching suggestions.

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Strategies for Teaching

The review of second-language-related principles presented in the previous chapter offers a number of applications to the classroom. Although it has not usually been part of the training of teachers to learn specialized strategies for working with limited-English students, you will find that many of the experiences you have already been exposed to will lend themselves quite easily to adaptation to these situations. If you are hungry for practical things that you can do with children, this chapter will stimulate your creativity not only in applying these methods but in adapting and inventing your own.

What to Say and How to Say It

Needless to say, when you are talking to someone who does not understand your language very well, it is important to speak slowly and distinctly. Avoid the tendency that native English speakers have to speak louder than normal, as if the decibel level makes a difference in the other person's comprehension. And don't distort your words or break them into syllables. Talk about things present in the room, in the "here and now." Use props and pictures

for reference. Accompany your speech with lots of gestures and actions to emphasize your meaning. Restate your message in several different ways. Ask the students questions about the points that you have made to check for comprehension. Make sure students have ample time to figure out what you have said. Extend your wait time after asking a question.

Target Your Vocabulary

Identify which words will be central to your lesson. Present the vocabulary words first, and then use them with definitions in your learning activities. Use the same words and terms throughout your lessons.

Visual Aids

Objects, demonstrations, and pictures are vital to ensure comprehension. Students need concrete references, especially at the beginning levels of proficiency. Place vocabulary words with pictures on bulletin boards or display them with an overhead projector.

Toys and tools that we take for granted might not be conventional items for the language-limited students. They may not have experienced snow, a garlic press, a pencil sharpener, or finger paint. It will be difficult for the students to find meaning in words related to objects or ideas with which they are not familiar. Careful preparation is needed to introduce background experiences for the students. It also helps if you work toward creating an atmosphere and building relationships that make it safe and comfortable for students to admit they don't know what you mean.

Consider recording a presentation or activity for playback at a later time. It can be used for reinforcement, review, or re-teaching. A section on using technology is presented later in this chapter.

Sheltered English

Teachers use a technique called *sheltered English* to teach English through content areas such as math, science, and social studies. The objective is to make sure students are able to understand what is being said by controlling vocabulary and idioms. This method involves using short, simple sentences with frequent paraphrasing

and repeating. It relies heavily on the use of props, pictures, charts, and hands-on activities.

For example, in a lesson on baking a cake, you would want to have assembled all the ingredients you would need and all the utensils you would use. You might begin by showing an example of the desired end product to acquaint the students with the goal. Then, name each ingredient and let the students look, taste, and smell each item. Make sure the students can see what you do. Count out two eggs as the students watch. Describe your actions as you go along. "Now, I am cracking the eggs. Next, I will separate the white from the yolk." Present the steps of the recipe one at a time, as the students watch you model the desired behavior.

Provide Written Support

Vocabulary lists with pictures, if possible, and lists of expressions (such as "cracking the egg" in the previous example) will be helpful. Students with advanced proficiency will benefit from outlines, lecture notes, or summarized readings that coordinate with your lessons. Beginning students may need more structure; you might provide sentences with key words or terms left out that the student can fill in during your presentation.

Problem Areas

By becoming aware of your own speech, you will be more sensitive to those who do not speak English and can offer rephrasing or an explanation as needed, according to the puzzled looks of the students or their lack of appropriate responses. Idioms and abbreviations can be particularly frustrating.

Idioms. We use many idioms in everyday speech without being aware of them. Expressions such as "Cat got your tongue?" or "It's raining cats and dogs!" will leave students bewildered. One newly arrived student from Peru could not figure out what the word *pretty* meant: "I thought it meant, like beautiful, but you keep saying things like 'pretty good.' "

Trying to avoid idioms will have you "tripping over your tongue." Besides, if we "cut out" these rich expressions, we will narrow our

range of expression and leave our speech dull and boring. Instead, use such terms as part of lessons to acquaint your students with our "colorful language."

Acronyms. Often our speech is "peppered" with abbreviations. Remember to explain the meaning each time you use one, or refer to a poster that has the ones you use frequently. Also, you can develop a lesson on common acronyms. Do you use PE, VIP, ASAP in your daily vocabulary? In education, we are especially enamored with these expressions (ESL, IEP, and so on) that are thoroughly confusing to the uninitiated.

Synonyms. Whenever appropriate, point out that different words can have the same meaning. Ask if students can think of examples in their native language to share with the class. This can lead to a general discussion on regional word usage as well. Do you "carry" (South) people to the store or "drive" (North) them? Is your engine under the "hood" (U.S.) of the car or the "bonnet" (England, New Zealand)?

Homonyms. Words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings challenge most elementary and secondary students. How do you distinguish *be* and *bee*; *sea* and *see*; or *two*, *too*, and *to*? How did you learn the difference between *principle* and *principal* or *capital* and *capitol*?

Homographs. Words that are spelled the same but have different pronunciations and meanings will make reading difficult for beginners. Both meanings will need to be presented before the student begins to use the vocabulary on his own. Contextual clues in the reading passage will aid the student's comprehension. Common examples include *lead*, *read*, *wind*, *tear*.

Following is a review checklist of things to do in preparation for class:

1. Target the vocabulary and present it ahead of time. Identify and label the concepts you will cover so that students will

be able to move from what they know to what they will need to know by the end of the lesson.

2. Pass out a reference guide, such as a desktop dictionary page, or post vocabulary words.
3. Provide students with an outline of your presentation.
4. Gather props, charts, and other visuals you will need.
5. Remember that conventional toys and tools that are familiar to you may require an introduction and hands-on experience time on the part of your students.

Using Multisensory Activities to Engage Students

It can be difficult to open lines of communication with students with low English proficiency. Students may nod their heads or say they understand because they think that behavior is what is expected of them. They imitate what they see the other children do. Some do not want to bring what they see as cultural disrespect on themselves, so they nod and smile. Activities such as drama, dance, and drawing can facilitate initial relationships in a nonthreatening environment that can be fun and stimulating at the same time.

Drama

Using drama in the classroom can help limited-English students with their communication skills in many ways. Students can respond to a prepared script that emphasizes pronunciation or a point of grammar. Or they can write their own scripts or just improvise given roles. Acting offers a chance to use vocabulary and grammar and practice enunciation in a meaningful way. A prop box is a *must* in the classroom. Acting also calls attention to body language—such as gesture, posture, and social distance—and to the paralinguistic features of language—such as pauses, intonation, and rhythm.

Having children role-play given social situations will be far less socially threatening than having them speak for themselves. It may provide a comfortable way for those students who do not participate

in general discussion to become active in the classroom. If a mistake is made, it is the fault of the character, not the student. Students can use a cassette recorder to help them to assess their speech. They can practice by themselves before performing in front of the entire class. The teacher can supervise a rehearsal before the class performance to make sure the students understand the interpretation of the words and to give words of encouragement. Students who do not have roles in the plays will be prepared to follow and participate in discussion about the plays. Drama can be combined with writing and reading exercises.

For the very young or the very shy, try puppet shows or marionettes, in which the speech producer is not even seen!

Song and Dance

Singing can be a great change-of-pace activity. It can be used to energize or relax the students, depending on the selection you make. Just bring a cassette tape and you are ready. Singing will offer the students another means of expression. The lyrics can be used as a topic for discussion. Students can be encouraged to make up their own songs and present them to the class.

Sharing a little of American culture—whether through a square dance, a line dance, or the Hokey Pokey—is a great way to get all students up and moving and involved with one another. No language is necessary. Students mimic the leader's actions in time to the music. When they are ready, students can join in the words to the songs. For example, while doing the Hokey Pokey, elementary limited-English students will find themselves quickly learning the parts of the body. Meanwhile in a history class, secondary students can be taught French court dancing of the Renaissance or the Charleston of the Roaring Twenties.

Another suggestion is to have the English-limited student teach everyone else a few of the dances that are popular in his or her culture. Requiring little in the way of verbal explanation, dance is taught primarily by demonstration.

Drawing

Students can record thoughts and feeling through pictures. They can draw their responses to questions or record observations. Stu-

dents can develop a diary of activities carried out in the classroom, like the courtroom artist. All that is needed is paper and a box of crayons—or for the more technologically sophisticated, a computer. For those who are uncomfortable with drawing, a selection of preprinted pictures or colorforms might suffice. By asking questions that call for a visual response, you can learn a lot about your students—who the members of their family are, what they like to eat, where they like to go. Their interests, interpretations, and understandings of the world around them will be reflected in their artwork. Drawings can later be labeled as language skills progress. Pictures can enhance vocabulary development.

Drawing can be used for small group projects. Two to four students might be assigned the task of doing a poster or chart related to a topic of study. For example, students of any age and ability could design a travel brochure after completing a geography unit.

You can check students' abilities to follow directions by asking them to perform a set of instructions using pictures. For example, direct the students to put a circle around one item and make a square around another. Or have them move their pencils two blocks east, then two blocks south, to check comprehension of geographic directions.

Building Literacy

The language experience approach (LEA) is an example of a student-centered technique that ensures the development of relevant materials appropriate for the learners. Students create their own reading material after discussion of a topic. They determine the purpose, the form, and the audience for their writing. The teacher or aide writes down the words of the students exactly as they are dictated, and the students copy the text. As students become more capable, they will take on the initial writing, too. Correction is held off until the selection is reread and questions arise. As students reread the selections, they develop their reading ability. This whole-language approach has been found effective with students of all ages. The approach allows students to build on past experiences and incorporate new information with what they know. Research shows that effective language development takes

place when the classroom provides opportunities for students to generate, read, and respond to their own writing.

The development of writing skills can be promoted through the use of dialogue or communication journals in which the student and teacher write to each other. In this interactive process, the teacher responds to the student's entries or asks questions. The teacher does not correct the student's writing but may incorporate a correct form of expression in the responses. There are many benefits to this activity. Students get personal attention from the teacher. The journals provide a way for the students and the teacher to get to know each other. They are both actively engaged in communication. Also, the students can ask questions that they may not be comfortable asking aloud.

A Community of Learners

In order to maximize learning in the classroom, students must be actively involved. Research suggests that the most effective way to help students is to develop a community of learners. Determine what students already know and build from there. Students will profit most in classrooms that are student-centered, with the teacher in the role of facilitator. Examine your objectives to determine how you can provide opportunities for students to practice, apply, and evaluate the ideas you have presented. Then go on to see how you can help students to structure their own learning. As students interact with each other, they will learn both content and language.

Cooperative Groups

In general, cooperative learning involves students working together in small groups in which they are responsible for their own learning as well as that of their teammates. The nature of the task varies according to the particular technique implemented. Using David and Roger Johnson's learning-together method (1991), students work together to produce a group project. Students follow-

ing Robert Slavin's methods (1988) are placed in student teams to help each other learn material. Slavin's groups are based on team recognition, individual accountability, and an equal opportunity for success. Yael and Shlomo Sharan's group investigation method (1992) features a constructivist approach to learning in which students work together to identify problems, plan how to study them, collect information, and present reports in interesting and creative ways.

Language-limited students benefit in many ways from cooperative learning activities. As noted in chapter 1, cooperative learning groups may be more culturally consistent for students of some foreign backgrounds than whole-class learning. Students receive practice with language as well as practice with content. The teacher can carefully structure the composition of groups to combine students who have strong language and academic skills with those learning English as a second language. The first activities can be designed to build communication patterns and trust, beginning with nonverbal activities that require each member to participate in order for the task to be successfully completed. This might include putting a puzzle together when each member has a piece or certain "trust" activities in which children work together as a cohesive team.

If there is more than one limited-English speaker in the class, they can be grouped together for support or separated for greater exposure, depending on their needs and your intentions. All students will need to be taught the communication and social skills needed to work in a group. All students can be taught how to give help and how to explain solutions to problems, rather than just supply answers to questions.

Discussion of the group process should follow the cooperative learning experiences to ensure that group responsibilities (recorder, time captain, encourager, spokesperson, and so on) are divided and that each member has an opportunity to contribute to group discussion or task. Cooperative groups give the limited-English speaker a nonthreatening situation in which to rehearse responses that will later be called for in front of the entire class. Changing group membership after a period of time will increase student interaction.

Borrowing From Foreign Language Teachers

The work of foreign language teachers offers a variety of techniques that can be applied in the regular classroom to help you work effectively with all your students. Listed below are brief descriptions of some of the more useful approaches, with examples of how to apply them. Some will be appropriate for use with the entire class; others will be more suitable for small groups or individuals.

Direct Method

In the 1920s, the *direct method* of teaching foreign language became popular in the United States as an alternative to the previous century's reliance on grammar-translation techniques to teach classical languages. Proponents of the direct method felt that learning modern languages was important. Speech, with an interest in proper pronunciation, rather than writing was the goal. Teachers of the direct method speak only the language to be learned in class. Lessons are sequenced in progression of complexity. The receptive skills of listening and reading are taught before the productive skills of speaking and writing. Attention is given to the age and background of the student and to relating the language to its culture.

The direct method emphasized the fact that age and background have a bearing on language learning ability. It is important to use vocabulary suitable for the age of one's students. Knowing the background of your students, as noted in chapter 1, will help you choose lessons that are motivating and stimulating to them as you teach English through a content area. In teaching the steps of the scientific method, for example, let the students suggest a hypothesis to test, a question they propose, or something they want to know more about. For example, one elementary school class studying vision dissected a sheep's eye.

Today's classroom teachers can benefit from this method by seeing how the use of English is a part of our culture. Even the words are determined, to a great extent, by the cultural constructions of our world. For example, a classroom exercise in a social studies class might ask students to compare (with explanation for ESL stu-

dents) slang words used today versus those used during the 1920s. Ask your students what the modern counterparts are for such terms as *giggle water, big cheese, bees' knees, cat's meow,* and *spiffy.*

The Natural Approach

Communication activities in a low-anxiety setting are central to Krashen and Terrell's *natural approach* (1982). This method is especially effective for beginning and younger English students. The teacher models speech using high-interest, high-context topics to present vocabulary in a controlled manner. For example, the teacher might do an introduction activity at the beginning of the school year by describing the people in the room and asking questions about them.

The teacher guides the students in conversation through four stages. In the first stage, students communicate with nonverbal behaviors—movement and gestures. ("If you have brown eyes, stand up.") In the second stage, students respond to close-ended questions with one or two words. ("Are your eyes brown or blue?") In the third stage, students speak in phrases or complete sentences. ("I have brown eyes.") In the last stage, students can carry on conversations with minor guidance. ("I know a boy who has beautiful brown eyes and . . . ") The teacher gradually adds new vocabulary as the students slowly progress. Students respond at their own pace and are encouraged to realize they don't have to understand every word. The teacher does not correct errors so anxiety levels are not raised. After the students have developed intermediate oral proficiency skills, reading and writing are added.

An important contribution of this method is the identification of the stages of speech emergence. Teachers can structure their questions according to the ability levels of their students. Those who have very limited proficiency, in the preproduction stage, can be asked to use gestures to indicate a response or circle pictures on a page that represent ideas. Those with low proficiency, in early production stages, should be given yes/no questions or multiple choice questions in which the answer is supplied. Also effective are sentence-completion exercises or questions that require one- or two-word answers.

When students reach the fourth stage, teachers can ask for information, explanations, and interpretations or give problems for students to solve. Followers of this method do not correct the students' mistakes. The goal is communication.

From the natural approach, the regular classroom teacher once again realizes that students will have to be exposed to a great deal of language before they respond verbally. Typically, a student needs to build a working vocabulary of 500 words.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

This technique, developed by James Asher (Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty, 1985, pp. 42-43), begins by incorporating listening skills with movement. Asher noted that mothers often talk to their children using the imperative: "Turn around" or "Give me the ball." Used primarily with beginners, this approach couples commands with action. The teacher begins by modeling simply-stated directions using controlled vocabulary to build language, and students respond with the appropriate action: "Stand"; "Sit." Then the teacher expands to complete sentences: "Walk to the door"; "Open the door." Listening is emphasized and the students are not pressured to speak.

In the classroom, the teacher will find that new students with beginning English skills will respond well to commands used frequently that relate to classroom routines. Identify the requests you frequently make, such as "Clear your desks"; "Take out a pencil"; "Line up at the door." You can call on an individual to demonstrate that the commands are understood. Students are not required to give a verbal response.

Suggestopedia or Suggestology

Georgi Lozanov's method (Bowen et al, 1985, pp. 43-46) concentrates on providing a warm, relaxed, pleasant environment. Paying close attention to the student's emotional state, the teacher's approach is to create receptive students. Relaxation techniques and breathing exercises are used to begin each session, to enable students to tap their latent ability to learn a language. *Suggestopedia* requires an informal setting such as a living room. Musical inter-

ludes are also used for relaxation. The students are given an identity to assume, complete with distinct personality and profession. The lesson then proceeds over the next several days. First, the teacher introduces lines of dialogue with scripts and gives an informal explanation. Next, the teacher presents the dialogue with three different intonations (normal, soft, strong). Finally, the dialogue is read expressively set against music. Listening and speaking are emphasized over reading and writing.

Although the format of the Suggestopedia lessons may not be practical and the informal setting not available in public schools, the regular classroom teacher may find that providing an anxiety-free atmosphere is a good guideline to follow. Creating an attractive and inviting room will set the mood for students at any proficiency. If there are too many objects or pictures, students may easily be distracted by overstimulation. Color, lighting, and temperature, as well as the size of seats, will affect students' behavior. It is important to make sure the students' physical and emotional needs are being met.

Music can be used as an agent for relaxation and change of pace in the classroom to set an affective tone. Students may enjoy having music in the background while they are working individually or in small groups. Another application of this method would be to vary poetry readings or selections from literature according to the pattern suggested above.

Counseling-Learning or Community Language Learning

Introduced by Charles Curran (Bowen et al, 1985, pp. 46-47), the *counseling-learning* or *community language learning approach* focuses on the relationships between the people involved. The teacher's role is to understand the needs and feelings of the students learning a language and to help them reach their goal by establishing trust and cooperation in the group. The teacher, who must be bilingual, is known as a *knower* or *counselor-teacher.* At first, the students sit in a circle and are invited to talk to one another in their native language. The teacher is located outside the circle and translates the students' conversations. The students repeat the translations. The statements are taped and played at the end of the lesson as review or subject for a grammar lesson.

Students progress through five stages as they gain confidence, increase their ability to speak to and understand one another, and become less dependent on the teacher. As the students become more competent, the teacher becomes more active in asking questions, making corrections, and adding explanations. Finally, the teacher indicates by cue that students are making mistakes or that more appropriate expressions could be used. The students like the control they have over their learning and the group process that fosters cohesion and respect for one another.

In order to facilitate interaction give careful thought to the seating arrangement in the classroom. If possible, arrange the furniture in your room so students can sit in circles to talk to one another. When students sit in rows or at opposite ends of tables, it is difficult for them to interact with one another.

The role of the teacher in this approach is that of a counselor. No longer viewed as an authority whose task is to criticize, the teacher's job is to help students feel comfortable, to minimize anxiety. A safe environment is created in which students can explore their feelings, beliefs, and experiences. Attention is placed on group process, and students are encouraged to talk about what is meaningful to them. The teacher guides the students in their discussions. The classroom becomes student-centered. Children's needs for social interaction are acknowledged and met.

Other Group Processes

In our mobile society, many children are faced often with moving to a new neighborhood, learning their way around a new city, meeting new people, and making new friends. Teachers can help students recognize the wide range of feelings associated with adapting to new situations, help students develop support for one another, and help them develop the social skills they will need to be successful in dealing with these changes—which often can be traumatic. Similarly, other personal or community issues can be addressed through groups.

Small groups, or a fishbowl structure (in which a small number of students are selected to sit in the middle of the room while the

remaining students observe), can facilitate discussion of such topics as peer pressure, gender roles, dealing with parents, school traditions, or problems in the community.

Notational-Functional Approach

One of the most recent approaches to language learning, the *notational-functional approach*, first identifies the communication needs of students and then structures lessons around those needs. The social situations (home, work, leisure activities, transportation, health facilities, and the like) and social roles are identified. Then the concepts (time, money, and so on) related to those settings are ordered for presentation. Vocabulary and grammar are then integrated as the student learns the functions of language—for example, to make a statement, ask a question, make a comparison, express feelings.

The notational-functional approach helps the regular classroom teacher become aware of the language skills students need for their daily lives. Language related to school and the community will be of primary importance. The teacher will need to assess which skills students possess and which they need to acquire.

1. Can they introduce themselves?
2. Can they follow street directions?
3. Can they fill out forms?
4. Can they ask for help?
5. Can they read a menu?
6. Can they read and follow directions on medicine labels?
7. Can they make change with our currency?
8. Can they pass the driver's license test?
9. Do they understand commonly used idioms?
10. Do they know how to obtain social services?

With low-proficiency-English students, the teacher may have to determine what language is most necessary for survival. A good way to begin is to focus on the roles of the students—student, family member, baby-sitter, dishwasher, athletic team player, and so

on. Intermediate and advanced students can be asked what they need to know and to bring in examples. Role plays and simulations would be the corresponding models of teaching to implement.

Special attention can be given to signs in the community, information in the newspapers, ads on television and radio, and bulletins from church. Older students may need help with papers related to employment contracts and job benefits. Other topics might include leases, rental fees, and insurance.

From each of the methods previously described, you can use the following review chart as a reference for planning lessons using strategies adopted from second-language approaches for your limited-English students.

Summary of Strategies Adapted From Teaching Second Languages

Foreign Language Method	*Strategy*
Direct method	Teach English through content. Choose suitable vocabulary. Identify words as part of culture.
Natural approach	Use high-interest, high-context topics. Expose ESL students to basic vocabulary. Recognize stages of speech production. Select questions according to ability (yes/no, multiple choice, open-ended).
Total physical response	Identify requests commonly made. Check for comprehension by use of gestures, actions, references to pictures, or words on paper.
Suggestopedia or Suggestology	Provide a warm, relaxed environment. Use relaxation techniques. Incorporate music. Read with different expressions.
Counseling-learning or Community language approach	Arrange seating in a circle for student conversation. Acknowledge psychological and social needs.

	Build trust and cooperation. Use group format. Let students talk about what is important to them.
Notational-functional approach	Assess language skills needed for daily living. Identify students' social roles and social situations. Incorporate vocabulary and grammar as related to communication needs. Use role play and simulation exercises.

Using Technology

A variety of equipment is available to classroom teachers that you will find useful in working with limited-English students. Cassette tape recorders, videotape recorders, televisions, telephones, and computers can all be utilized to help individualize and personalize your instruction. The benefits of technology are only beginning to be recognized.

Tape Recording

There are many ways to use tape recorders in the classroom. To begin with, you can tape your presentations for students to play back at a later time. Students then have the opportunity to digest small bits of information at a time.

You can tape-record questions for those students who can't read or have trouble reading. In turn, they can answer on paper or tape-record their responses to you. Using the tape recorder will give them a chance to practice their answers. They can hear each answer and be sure it represents what they want to say. They can do a self-evaluation check.

You can prerecord material or special directions to go along with a textbook or other printed matter for those learning to read. Of course, there are many cassette-and-book sets of stories already available.

By exchanging tapes you can build a special relationship with your students. Use it as a way to get to know about them. This practice will provide another vehicle by which they can practice their language skills.

Working with a tape recorder will allow you to individualize your lessons. You can prepare material to review, to provide practice, or to provide enrichment activities.

Videotape

Many school districts have sophisticated equipment available for student use. By videotaping a presentation for later playback, the student will be able to see demonstrations and examples that were part of a presentation. Again, the student can follow the lesson at his or her own pace.

Students can use videotape to carry out assignments and develop creative projects. For example, research into the amount of graffiti in the streets or the number of people using public transportation can be shown on a screen, allowing the limited-English speaker to be involved in activities and carry out research that does not rely on reading skills.

Videotape can also be used to record progress. Periodic taping of students' involvement in activities will allow the students to see how language skills are progressing. By viewing the videotape with supervision, the student can also become aware of his or her body language and evaluate its appropriateness.

Television

Isolating segments from television and breaking them into parts for discussion and analysis will provide stimulus for critical thinking. News portions can be used as a guide for discussing current events. Cultural programs are often presented that will relate to topics you are studying in the classroom. There are also excerpts from favorite television shows that will capture the students' attention. Check with your librarian or media specialist for the laws and guidelines for showing copied material.

Telephone

In checking for comprehension and developing social skills, consider exercises using the telephone. Students can call for information from prerecorded messages. For example, time and weather information can be obtained by telephone. Movie information is also available.

Computer

With the advent of computer technology, most children will have the opportunity to use computers in the classroom. Computers not only stimulate motivation but also offer a variety of activities. Students can work individually, in pairs, or even in small groups. They work at their own pace on self-directed projects.

For beginning students, drill and practice programs and games are available commercially for building vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation and for reinforcing grammatical skills. You can create your own programs as the need arises.

For those just beginning to learn English, programs such as MacPaint or Kid Pix allow students to combine graphics with labeling, building up vocabulary, and spelling. These words and terms can then be used as the basis for sentences and later stories. Further suggestions for using pictures as stimuli to encourage students to respond are presented earlier in this chapter in the section on drawing. Students take great pride in the work they print from the computer. Students can produce banners and cards as well as stories and reports.

Hypercard and Linkway offer a unique opportunity for students to build their own dictionaries. As they become more proficient, they can build data banks that include text and graphics as they study a particular subject.

The word processing capabilities of computers allow students to concentrate on what they are trying to say without being bogged down by the slowness of handwriting, erasing, and correcting or by looking words up in the dictionary. The features of spell-checking, thesaurus, and grammar-checking alleviate the worry of the technical

aspects of writing. The limited-English students receive the support they need in order to express ideas.

Typing tutorials help students develop the keyboard skills they need. There are writing programs to help students through the composing process. Students can create plays, interviews, poetry, letters to pen pals, and newspapers. For more advanced students, desktop publishing programs will enhance newspaper production with the use of graphics.

Other projects might include creative writing magazines, school handbooks, instruction manuals, yearbooks, and calendars. The possibilities are endless. These activities give students opportunities to develop and practice not only reading and writing skills but also the social skills needed for collaboration.

Word processing can also be used to help students learn to read from the language experience approach. As their words are keyed into the computer by others, students come into contact with meaningful print. They will be encouraged to continue writing, or in this case typing on the keyboard, in a purposeful manner to increase their reading skills.

With electronic mail capability, your students can communicate with others all over the world. They will have an audience for their writing. Whether to exchange letters, seek information, or be involved in collecting information for a group scientific study, electronic mail can open the doors of your classroom by promoting active inquiry.

There are programs now available to introduce letters and words to young students. Such programs will be helpful with students beginning to read. There are games, puzzles, and drills as well as stories to provide practice.

For all students, creating database programs will give them the chance to collect and analyze information as part of a science or social studies project. Students can generate hypotheses, collect and record information, and evaluate the results as they explore the world they live in. Data can be gathered by observation, survey, or by interview. The type and amount of information collected will need to be carefully structured by the teacher so as not to be overwhelming or unmanageable. Older and more proficient students can move beyond categorization to develop their own research

questions and determine how they will collect the information they need. Databases also store information that students can retrieve as they study a particular subject for an oral or written report.

Using spreadsheets is another way to handle information. These can be used in mathematics lessons, because they allow mathematical operations to be performed through the addition of formulas. Lessons can then be combined with graphing exercises. Students can observe changes take place in real or simulated exercises.

LOGO is a list programming language that has been successful with abstract mathematical concepts and numeracy. Students move a robot in the shape of a turtle around a piece of paper by specifying what direction to move and how far to move in degrees. Immediately, students see the result of their programming. Students are forced to confront errors and identify possible alternative solutions, thus gaining experience in problem solving as well as cause-and-effect relationships. With LOGO, students progress from developing spatial skills to higher level skills of geometry. Other mathematical programs are available that allow students to explore the dynamic relationships of math concepts.

Other Resources

I hope that the strategies presented in this chapter will give you many ideas to try in your own classroom. Remember, you are not alone. The next chapter discusses other resources that are available to you and how to involve others in the classroom.

Suggested Activities

1. Select a unit of study and identify the vocabulary that you would present to your students before introducing the unit. List the props, posters, and other visual aids you would use throughout the unit.
2. Listen to the speech of the students in your class and list the idioms you hear. Develop a language lesson around the use of idioms.

3. Select a topic of study and identify all the technological equipment you could incorporate into the lesson to help the limited-English students.
4. Using the Summary of Strategies chart in this chapter as reference, select one adaptation from each approach to use in a lesson plan you are now developing.

Suggested Readings

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Involving Others

It's not a globe, it's a balloon," said one student to another. "Let me show you how to blow it up."

As the teacher heard the previous segment of a conversation, she realized she was not the only person from whom her students would be learning English. There would be many "helping teachers" who would introduce new concepts, model pronunciation, and make corrections when necessary.

Because children learn as much English, if not more, from their peers as they do from the planned curriculum, teachers can capitalize on this natural phenomenon in systematic ways. This chapter will highlight many of the ways you can utilize the resources of other people, from children in the classroom and school personnel to people in the community, in efforts to facilitate language acquisition.

Buddy System

In order to help new students feel comfortable, one obvious structure would be to assign a designated partner as a guide to aid adjustment. This helper would be ideally positioned to give

encouragement and to make sure the student has the right supplies and follows directions given to the class. Of equal importance, the new arrival will have a companion, someone to interact with throughout the day.

In addition, "buddies" also profit from their experience as helpers. They learn what it means to be responsible in carrying through commitments. Their relationships with the teacher will be enhanced as they realize they were selected (or volunteered) for this responsibility. They learn the joy of explaining things to others in a way the others finally understand. In fact, many of us were "born" as teachers when we were given opportunities as children to help our peers and siblings. Many of us can recall what a privilege it was to be chosen to escort another student to the office! Not only were we the ones chosen from the entire class, but we were also released from the discipline codes of "Stay in your seat" and "No talking."

Studies of conversations show that children are quite different from teachers when they point out mistakes to their peers. Children focus on the social aspect, asking for clarification only when they cannot understand what is communicated. Teachers, however, attend to the content, rectify the mistake, and expect the child to repeat the correct response. This, of course, can be a humiliating experience for children who are trying hard to please a new teacher in a new culture. One obvious example of this occurs when assignments are read aloud. Children who are struggling to pronounce a word are quite grateful for the assistance of a peer. Yet when the teacher corrects them, they often feel censured.

With elementary students, another approach is to assign different buddies for different tasks. This widens the exposure of students without overwhelming any single individual. For example, one student might be assigned as a "study buddy," a second student would function as a "lunch buddy" to take the student to the cafeteria, and a third student would be a "bus buddy" to make sure the student gets on the right bus and has a person to sit with.

Each of the helpers is given an opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility and leadership skills. It also helps each buddy develop empathy, as he or she feels the experience of one who is different. With each assistant you recruit, the teacher is also able to

create a new bond in the ongoing relationship with students. It is as if the teacher is saying, "I trust you. I value your help. I feel grateful for your willingness to pitch in and help. We are all in this together."

Team Teaching

Rarely are you the only teacher a student comes in contact with during the day. Integrating the curriculum across disciplines is extremely helpful for students with limited English. The teachers would be able to target the vocabulary and grammar they are using. Principles would be reinforced throughout the day. You can develop your own themes or use commercially prepared kits such as Voyage of the Mimi, in which English and social studies skills are combined with science and math concepts.

Although it might be optimistic to expect all the teachers to coordinate their efforts, it may be more practical to coordinate intentions with a few with whom you have good rapport. For example, an elementary teacher can make sure that the librarian and art teacher are aware of what has been taking place and what they can do to help. Even the bus driver can be recruited to pitch in: "When Tasha comes on the bus, ask her slowly how her day was. Then please make sure she does not sit alone."

The middle school concept has gained increased acceptance and implementation for students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, precisely because teachers now have team-planning time structured into their schedules. Most importantly, secondary teachers must communicate with one another on a regular basis so that progress is not restricted to a single class or compartmentalized in such a way that the student becomes confused with inconsistencies or overwhelmed by vocabulary. For example, a social studies teacher can combine forces with the math teacher to reinforce the concept of angles in studying the pyramids of ancient Egypt. On a more general level, several teachers can get together and coordinate their efforts: "I notice that Ling really cringes when I attempt to correct him. What have you tried that works better? Maybe we could all try to do the same thing so that he hears consistent feedback."

Imagine how frustrated a limited-English student would be if she were told by one teacher to do or say one thing, while another required something else, and still another quite another thing. For example, a student is encouraged by one teacher to talk as much as possible and not worry about grammar; another teacher tells him to exercise more restraint and only speak after he has thought through what he wants to say and how he will say it; a third teacher absolutely insists that he not speak at all until he can "talk right." With these mixed messages, such a student is likely to follow the advice of the third teacher, avoiding the risk of making mistakes whenever possible.

Special School Personnel

There may be additional resource people available in your school, or in your district, to support your efforts. One such specialist is the ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. In some states, ESL teachers have a special credential with advanced training in teaching English as a second language (rather than bilingual training); in other states, they have no special training at all.

Generally, children are placed in an ESL class for part of the day and in the regular classroom for the rest of the time. The number of hours varies depending on the school district and the needs of the students. The dynamics of the ESL class may be far different from the way you might usually structure your own class.

Typically, ESL teachers follow a grammar-based curriculum; however, more recent trends favor a task-based curriculum that can be coordinated with your classroom content. Another approach is for the ESL teacher to use sheltered English to teach a content area. If you contact the ESL teacher in your area and correlate your classroom teaching lessons, the ESL teacher can prepare the student by introducing needed background concepts before you present new material. In addition, the ESL teacher can introduce related vocabulary. If you notice mistakes in grammar or pronunciation, you can communicate them to the ESL teacher who can work with the student individually in particular areas, allowing you to address other matters. By coordinating your efforts you will

eliminate duplication and not subject the student to undue pressure.

Although offering special instruction and an opportunity to meet with like peers, being placed in ESL classes has some disadvantages. Students often complain that they don't like being identified as different. Also, pulling them out of their regular classrooms may make them feel as if they are falling even further behind. Again, coordinating your work with other professionals can help to minimize some of these problems. For example, you might say, "I notice that Hassan leaves class reluctantly when it is time to meet with you. It seems as if he does not want to make up more work that he missed. If in your work with him you could combine some of my tasks with your own, he would not feel as penalized."

Other possible sources of support would be bilingual teachers, foreign language teachers, and English teachers in your school or in your district. They might be willing to share strategies and materials with you. Or you could invite them to visit your classroom and make suggestions specific to certain students. Outside the classroom, you could ask them to help you brainstorm solutions for particular problems.

If your student reads below a given score on a standardized reading test, the student is entitled to help from a reading resource teacher. Once again, rather than have the reading teacher work in isolation from the regular classroom, you can discuss your units with the reading teacher so that he or she can prepare the student to participate in the regular classroom. This professional will be dealing not only with reading skills, per se, but also writing, speaking, and listening. The student can practice with the reading teacher privately before being called on in front of a group of peers or the whole class.

Traditionally, the reading teacher has worked with students in a "pullout" situation in a room outside the regular classroom. However, rather than isolating students, reading teachers are beginning to work right in the regular classroom. This provides the reading teacher with the opportunity to see how the regular classroom and the teacher, in particular, function. It is also less disruptive for the students who are often afraid (rightfully so) they are going to miss something "fun" or "important" when they are called out of class.

Other personnel to consult with would include the school counselor, social worker, and psychologist. They can offer aid in the areas of handling adjustment, building self-esteem, and establishing support groups. They can also deal with issues related to fear of failure, perfectionist attitudes, and other cognitive messages that interfere with learning. In addition, they can help you work directly with students in addressing emotional needs. These school professionals are also able to make referrals to other resources in the community, if needed.

For example, in the case of one child who was not only struggling with learning English but with staying out of the reach of his alcoholic, abusive father, a school counselor was instrumental in helping to stabilize the family situation. Efforts by the principal, school psychologist, counselor, and referring teacher were all united in their determination to help this child succeed in spite of adverse conditions.

When this child was later able to express himself more fully, he explained to his teacher that as much as he appreciated the help he received with his school performance and language abilities, of even greater importance was the interaction that helped change the poisonous atmosphere of his home. If these American people seemed to care enough to intervene on his behalf, surely he could learn their language so that he might thank them.

One last group of school personnel who offer a specialized area of expertise are the speech teachers, who can offer help in the area of pronunciation. Age and development are factors of maturity. Because students learning a foreign language after age 12 or 13 will have difficulty mastering an American accent, some expertise would be helpful to minimize gross problems.

Cross-Age Tutoring

Students

Another type of project that has met with success is a tutoring program. As older and experienced students are paired with younger students, benefits to both parties accrue. For students who

have recently arrived in this country, there is much comfort in meeting someone who can identify with the experience of being immersed in a new culture. They understand how problems arise. Older students can empathize and share what they did and how it helped them. They also serve as role models.

One such program might involve setting up a system whereby junior high or high school students meet once a week with early elementary school students. The older students are given the responsibility to plan for and prepare an hour of activity.

Tutoring sessions require planning and coordination by both teachers. For example, the older students can be responsible for implementing activities related to a unit being studied in the regular classroom. Students might work in groups or be paired individually. Their activities might include reading to younger children, sight word instruction, or word puzzles. Hearing-sound activities can include reading Dr. Seuss's books to attain phonemic awareness. Letter-sound activities can involve putting up letters for a known word and changing the first letter (*run* to *sun* to *fun*). Writing activities can be writing books or letters together. The tutors, under the supervision of the teachers, would have to decide what activities would be appropriate, which materials they would need, and how to structure the time spent with the students.

This presents a problem-solving situation that involves higher-level thinking skills for the tutors. The tutors would have to analyze their own learning and break it down into steps for the younger students. These activities would serve also as a reinforcement for the older students. The tutors thus find themselves in a new role, as "teacher," which provides them with experience to help their own children in the future as they grow up. And, as another benefit, it may also serve as an introduction to a career in education.

The younger, less proficient students are placed in situations that are enjoyable and meaningful and that have low pressure. Remember, language is social in nature. In a tutoring situation, students are free to analyze their language skills and share strategies with each other.

The older students can develop a sense of pride and accomplishment from helping others that can lead to an increase in self-esteem

and the development of positive attitudes about themselves and school. Studies show that tutors gain in achievement and attitude, giving credence to the idea, "If you want to learn something, teach it!"

Parents

It is especially important for parents to be involved in activities that support literacy. When teachers explain to parents how children learn, as well as the type of behavior expected by the teacher in the classroom, they help achieve this goal. At one home, for example, it was relatively common for everyone to talk at the same time at the dinner table. The child had learned from an early age that if you want to say something you had better yell louder than others. This strategy did not exactly serve her needs very well in the American classroom. After explaining to the parents what was expected, the whole family instituted practice in which each participant would take turns speaking only after being recognized by the designated "teacher" of the day.

Some children need to be taught that asking questions in school is not only appropriate but welcome. Reading to young children in particular in any language and talking about the reading are vital activities that support fluency of communication. Those parents who are literate, but not in English, can be encouraged to read to their children in their native language. Teachers can impress on the parents their responsibility to pass their heritage (folk tales, rhymes, and poetry) from one generation to the next.

The problem is that teachers receive so little training in how to consult with parents. What do you do with a parent who is resistant to your best efforts? How do you handle the parent who feels you are meddling? What do you do when there are obvious family problems that are affecting the child's behavior? How do you get parents to comply with what you are suggesting?

In an ideal situation, counseling specialists would be available to address these difficulties. Alas, such help is often not available, leaving you with the task. Because you may feel unprepared to apply advanced-level helping skills, you can recruit the assistance of experts to help train you and others who are interested. Faculty at the university can recommend books for you to read and design

workshops for you in this area that will teach you strategies to use in consulting with parents.

In one school, a teacher who was taking some counseling classes put together a mini-workshop for parents who were interested in augmenting their skills in parenting. These sessions ran four weeks at a time and covered such topics as opening lines of communication with your child, setting limits, balancing school and outside activities, and when to seek outside help for family problems.

Participating in parent-teacher organizations is another way to get to know and enlist the support of the parents of your community. Your visibility in such associations is proof you are working with the parents to provide the best education possible for their children.

Intergenerational Tutoring

Adults of retirement age are able to offer a wealth of skills and knowledge. Many cultures value group interaction. Intergenerational tutoring is an extension that naturally fits into the public school arena. There are many parents and grandparents who will volunteer their time to help students. The teacher needs only to match the adult with the student and provide appropriate activities. The benefits of cross-age tutoring mentioned above apply in intergenerational tutoring as well.

Community Resources

Open the doors of the classroom. Venture out or bring the world inside your room to provide immediate experiences for your students. Anyone who has become truly fluent in another language did not learn it in the classroom. Once you get students excited about learning English, they will be motivated to take what they have learned into the real world where it really counts.

Field Trips

Expand the classroom by taking a field trip to the farm or the factory or the post office. For some students, the bus ride alone

through the community is an eye-opening experience. You would be surprised how many students have never left their neighborhood.

Visiting restaurants of different ethnic groups is a popular field trip. Decor, food, background music, and in some cases foreign menus give students an indication of different customs. Visiting museums to see traveling exhibitions can also be a meaningful trip. It is important for all students to see contributions made by people of diverse backgrounds.

Visitors

There are many people in the community who may be willing to visit your classroom. Invite businesspeople to come and demonstrate the services they provide or the products they produce, as they relate to topics of study, to bring these subjects alive for the students. The subject of owning a business can be a lesson in itself. Many people will bring samples for the students. The visit can serve as an introductory or culminating activity for a unit. Students can prepare a list of questions ahead of time. Homemakers have talents or hobbies as well that they can share with your students. Asking members of your students' families to talk about their work or avocation will create bonds in the classroom. You don't have to wait for Career Day or Culture Day. These can be ongoing visits.

Imagine a renowned chef coming to class bearing samples of the masterpieces he has created, letting the children taste his treats, explaining how he creates new dishes. Then, he describes his own life story, how when he first arrived in this country and stepped off the boat, he could not speak a word of English.

He says he felt as if he were invisible, that as long as he could not speak the language of this country, nobody would give him a chance. He was determined, however, that he would speak English like a native (the kids laugh because he has a thick accent). "OK, OK, so I don't speak so good." (The kids laugh again.) "Well, I don't speak well. Better? Anyway, English is everything to be successful. What good is it to cook like an angel if I can't talk to other people? All of you, not just those of you from other countries, must study hard in school. Your whole life, people will judge you by the way you speak." What an effective presentation that would be!

Artists, musicians, skilled craftspeople, and scientists could present their work to students of any level. Again, it would be particularly meaningful if the guests spoke English as a second language.

On the secondary level, for more proficient students you can consider inviting guests to talk about their personal experiences on key concepts such as assimilation, immigration, prejudice, political power, and social conditions in our society. In history, sociology, or psychology classes, speakers make excellent contributions to class discussions.

Cultural Exchanges

Art, music, dress, and foods can be the central themes of a multicultural awareness experience. Potluck lunches or dinners bring together people of the community. Students can be assigned to give an informative talk, sing a song, demonstrate a dance, explain a game, or write a recipe or prepare a dish. Students or adults can show pictures or slides of places they have lived or traveled and talk about the customs.

Language for All

Although this book emphasizes teaching strategies for individuals with differences in their language capacities, children are very similar in their basic desires. They want to understand the world around them. They want to be accepted and liked by their peers. They want to develop skills and knowledge that will help them be successful in life. They want to feel validated by their teachers. Through the strategies presented in this book, it is possible for teachers to be more sensitive to the children in their care.

In spite of your best intentions to be more responsive to children who are struggling as newcomers to our culture and language, there are limits on the time, energy, and resources that you have available. Even though you may be overburdened with other responsibilities and priorities, even though you don't feel adequately prepared to handle many of the challenges you will face with limited-English students, you *can* make a difference in a relatively short period of time.

The survival skills presented in this book provide you with all the basics you need to implement programs and structures helpful to the students in your classroom who are struggling the most. Perhaps the greatest gift you can ever offer to children, besides instilling a love of learning, is to help them express themselves in such a way that they are truly understood by others.

Suggested Activities

1. Make a catalog of possible speakers with culturally diverse backgrounds who could make presentations to your students.
2. Identify potential field trip sites that would expand the experiences of your students.
3. List possible resource personnel in your school or district that you could team with for consultation.
4. Plan an integrated interdisciplinary unit with a colleague for students with limited English.

Suggested Readings

Coleman, S. (1990). Middle school remedial readers serve cross-grade tutors. *The Reading Teacher, 43*(7), 524-525.

Juel, C. (1991). Cross-age tutoring between student athletes and at-risk children. *The Reading Teacher, 45*(3), 178-185 .

Kottler, J., & Kottler, E. (1993). *Teacher as counselor: Developing the helping skills you need.* Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.

Children With Limited English

Teaching Strategies for the Regular Classroom

Ellen Kottler
Western High School, Las Vegas, Nevada

When you and your students do not share a common language, both of you are at a great disadvantage. Ellen Kottler shows how to use a variety of techniques in your daily routine to help language-limited students — regardless of your experience with teaching or with foreign languages. Now you can help limited-English students learn without neglecting other students in the process.

Kottler takes readers through the same logical sequence followed by teachers who deal with non-English-speaking children, and shows how to . . .

- Create a relationship of trust and cooperation with students
- Establish reasonable expectations for second-language development
- Adapt practical strategies to the classroom
- Involve others outside the classroom

Anyone who has either learned a foreign language, or tried to teach someone whose native language is different, will appreciate the importance of this book. Ellen Kottler draws on over twenty years of experience to help other teachers make the most of a changing school workplace. This is a book that all teachers should have close at hand.

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